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Burton's Theatre—The "Winter's Tale."
The weather, last night, was very appropriate for Mr. Burton's Shakespearian revival, the note of preparation for which gave us reason to expect something equal to the brilliant representations of "Twelfth Night," "The Merry Wives of Windsor," "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "The Tempest," under the direction of the same able hands. The "Winter's Tale" is not one of the most popular of Shakespear's plays, and it has not been frequently acted here. We remember only one representation of it. That was at this theatre, when Mrs. Warner (lately deceased) played Hermione. The general impression then was that

it was a bore to sit through four acts to see a fine statue scene in the end. The first and second acts are very heavy, and it is not till the advent of Perdita and Autolycus that the play may be said to be really interesting. No Shakspearean

personal comedy, however, appeals more to the heart of the careful reader than the "Winter's Tale," and Hazlitt says, after seeing Mrs. Siddons in Hermione, Mr. Kemble in Leontes and Bannister as Antolycus, that it is one of the best acting of the author's plays. The story is founded upon a novel by Robert Greene; but

the original, and startling conclusion. The novel appeared in 1888, and Malone assigns the play to 1604, but the first edition that we have of it (there is a copy in the Astor Library) was printed in 1623. Foreman saw it acted at the Globe in 1611. Horace Walpole conjectured that the play was written on a commission for the Swan Theatre.

the mother of Queen Elizabeth, and that the jealous Leantes was Henry VIII. Certain passages in the play would seem to bear out this speculation, and Shakspeare is known to have had an intense craving for the Queen's favor. The fact that the novel appeared in 1688 does not hinder Maitland's theory, because Shakspeare lived

Leontes, king of Sicilia, is entertaining Polixenes, king of Bohemia. The guest, at the opening of the play, has given notice of his intention to return to his own country. Leontes urges him to tarry a while longer,

The jealousy of Leontes is aroused by the warmth with which Hermione pleads to the King of Bohemia, and he urges his cupbearer, Camillo, to poison Polixenes. Camillo refuses, and escapes with the king of Bohemia. Hermione is thrown into prison, where she gives birth to a female child. Paulina, wife of Antigonus, pleads with the king

on behalf of the queen, and Leontes, in a rage, orders Antigonus to expose the child on some barren sea coast. Antigonus departs on his mission; and thus closes the second act. Leontes has sent to the Delphian oracle in relation to the case of Hermione, who is brought to trial charged with adultery and high treason. Her speech is but little inferior in vigor and matronly modesty to that of Queen Katharine, in "Henry VIII." The

Oracles decide her chance, and say that Leonidas shall die without an heir if the lost child be not found. At the same moment Mamilius, the heir apparent, in fear of the Queen's nasty trial, dies. Leonas is suddenly awakened, and sees too late the consequences of his rash and groundless anger. Hermione is supposed to die also. The scene suddenly changes to Bohemia, and we see the child exposed by Antigonus, who is snapped up as a sort

of delicate *stomach* and eaten by a bear. The child is picked up by an old shepherd. At the opening of the fourth act—Time as Chorus informs us that we must "slide o'er sixteen years"—we are in the dominions of Polixenes, and hear Camillo ask permission to revisit Sicilia. The king informs him that the Prince Florizel goes often to the house of a poor shepherd, and that Camillo must assist him to fathom the cause. We are then

introduced to Autolycus, a roguish pedlar, who comes in with his jolly song—
 "When daffodils begin to peer,"
 He "dees" a clown neatly; and we then have a love scene between Prince Florizel and Perdita, supposed to be the shepherd's daughter, but really the lost Sicilian princess.
 Hazlitt quotes this scene as the sweetest poetry in the

play. After one pastoral residence, in which Adolphus plays a principal part, we have a proposal by Florisel to Perdita, the discovery of the flirtation by Polixenes, and the flight of the lovers to Sicilia, where all the parties meet, and, the mystery being explained, the play ends happily. Hermione is not dead, but by a device—

the superstition of his time—has been concealed and is now exhibited by Paulina as a statue, which suddenly becomes animated, much to the delight of Leontes. What Hermione was doing during the sixteen years after her supposed death is a mystery which is not explained.

the crabbed and tortuous style of the speeches of Leontes, reasoning on his own jealousy, beset with doubts and fears, and entangled more and more in the thorny labyrinth, bears every mark of Shakespeare's peculiar manner of conveying the painful struggle of different

strangled in their birth." Camillo's blunt common sense and honesty opposed to the king's groundless jealousy make matters worse, and anxious to justify his previous words, he breaks out in a bitter speech. We have copied it from the folio edition, preserving the or

Is whispering nothing?
Is leaning Cheeke to Cheeke? Is meeting Nones?
Kissing with in-side Lip? Stopping the Carriere
Of Laughter with sigh (a Note Infallible
Of breaking honestie) horsing foot on foot?
Skulking in corners? wishing Cloaks more swift?
Houres minutes? Noone Midnight? and all these

Blind with the Pin and Web, but there; there only.
That would unseen be wick'd? Is this nothing?
Why then the World and all that's in't is nothing,
The covering Skie is nothing, *Bohemia* nothing,
My wife is nothing, nor Nothing have these Nothings,
If this be nothing.

Coleridge thinks "the idea of this delightful drama is a

genuine jealousy of disposition, and it should be immediately followed by a perusal of Othello, which is the direct contrast of it in every particular." Our own idea is that the play is deficient in interest, on account of the fact that Leontes has no ground whatever for his jealousy. It does not seem natural; and if it is so, it breaks out too soon and too violently. It is a relief to turn from this beast and view

the noblest of the great master's heroines—the devoted Paulina—a curiosity—a woman who was true to another woman in adversity. Camillo is a fine portrait, and Autolycus one of Shakespeare's jolliest rogues. Perdita, “the prettiest low born lass that ever ran upon the green sward,” is, as Collier says, “a union of perfect grace and perfect simplicity.” It seems to us that Shakespeare elab-

borated the fourth and fifth acts, being conscious of the weakness of the first part of the play; and Autolycus, who is not necessary to the plot, is introduced when the sad tale begins to brighten a little, and cheers us with his songs and his jokes. Autolycus now-a-days would live in the Fifth avenue and have a seat at the Broker's Board.

As usual, Shakspeare deals in this play almost entirely

with courts and countiers. The characters are nearly all highly born, and the stupid idea of blood is carried out in Perdita, who could not be beautiful, or graceful, or womanly, unless she had been a king's daughter. The critics have frequently made merry over the improbabilities and anachronisms in this play, and Johnson called Shakspeare stupid, because he gave Bohemia a sea coast. But even in these latter

days we find such excellent authority as the London Times rather weak in its geography, calling Erzeroum, in Turkey, and Worcester, in Massachusetts, seaports. It is probable that Shakspeare, like many of his countrymen now-a-days, was not very well informed as to other countries. But as this drama is put forth as a tale to be told by the winter fireside—as purely legendary and imaginative as the Arabian Nights' Entertainments—we should

not expect it to be particularly correct in its unities or geography.

The "Winter's Tale" was played last night with the following cast:—

SICILIANS.

Leontes, King of Sicilia.....Mr. H. A. Perry
Mamillius, his son.....Miss Gouley
Camillo, Cnn. Reuer to Polixenes.....Mr. Deady

Antigonus, an Old Lord.....	Mr. Rainford
Hermione, Queen to Leonides.....	Mrs. A. Parker
Perdita, her daughter.....	Miss E. Thorne
Paulina, wife to Antigonus.....	Mrs. Hughes
BOHEMIANS.	
Polixenes, King of Bohemia.....	Mr. Leflingwell
Florizel, his son.....	Mr. Reynolds

The Old Shepherd.....	Mr. Gourley
The Clown, his son.....	Mr. Moore
Autolycus, a rogue.....	Mr. Setshela
Neatherd.....	Mr. Burton
Mops.....	Mr. Paroloe
Dorcas.....	Mrs. Holman
	Mrs. Brelsford

In the ensemble of the stage the representation was

quite equal to that of either of the Shakespearean comedies that have been given here, which is high praise. The scenery was all new and very good. In the second act there was a view of Mount Etna in eruption which was very striking and effective. The shepherd's house and farm grounds, in the fourth act, were very well done, and everything about this scene had a pleasant rurality, exactly in accordance with the author's idea. The dances

of shepherds and shepherdesses was deliciously pastoral. The statue was exceedingly well managed, and the mounting of the play throughout gave evidence of close study, frequent and careful rehearsal, and a most praiseworthy attention to detail.

In point of costume there is no recognized authority for this play. It is a matter of taste with the stage manager and he may adopt the Athenian or the Italian

style. It would be exceedingly difficult to fix the period, as the people talk about all sorts of periods, some of them very far apart. But as they seem to take their religion from Greece, Mr. Burton has wisely concluded that their costumes would be likely to come from the Athenian tailors. He has accordingly dressed his actors in the rich, flowing, graceful costumes, of that city.

of Shakespeare in which the text is more tortuous, crabbed and difficult to be construed, than "The Winter's Tale." The meaning of several passages is totally incomprehensible. Many of the speeches are of exceeding length and amazing mystery. With all these things pressing upon our mind, we were agreeably surprised to find that Mr. Burton's actors were generally, though not altogether faithfully, to the

what was better, that they seemed to understand, and to be able to convey to the audience, its spirit and its meaning. Mr. Perry has hardly weight enough for Leontes, but yet he acted it well. His conception was good, and his readings, though sometimes too stilted and steggy, displayed judgment and intelligence. His performance lacked dignity and repose, and his exordiations of the

poetry. The scene with Antigonus was exceedingly well acted. Mr. Barton's Antelycus was a clever piece of acting, but not one of his best. It was not equal to